

Signing up...



Photo by Fredrick D. Joe

Ken Manthei paints the north wall of Holick's Boot Makers on Northgate Wednesday. Manthei owns a sign painting business and draws editorial cartoons for the Bryan-College Station Eagle.

Crazy ads only amusing parts of gimmicked 'Crazy People'

By TODD STONE
Of The Battalion Staff

The film "Crazy People" depends on a clever gimmick — the promotion of off-beat and zany advertisements of popular products.

The hilarious ads are designed to hook the public into the theaters. The previews for the film show a funny ad such as, "Metamucil — it helps you go to the toilet." The viewer thinks, "Oh, that's funny. I think I'll see the movie."

That is exactly what real estate companies do by giving you a free toaster ... all you have to do is take a three-hour condominium tour, and the \$7.95 toaster is yours.

But you don't want to waste your time on the tour, you just want the toaster.

I felt the same way watching "Crazy People." I just wanted the 15 minutes of funny advertisements, not a contrived movie that was put together in a half-hearted manner.

Dudley Moore stars as Steve, an advertising copy writer, who loses touch with reality because his wife

left him. He is convinced that his job as an advertiser is to tell lies to the public.

Since he's off-balance, he creates honest ads that are terrible for a marketer, but funny for a movie audience.

At the company's request, Steve ends up in a mental institution, where he is surrounded by ... you guessed it — "crazy people."

Daryl Hannah plays a flaky patient, Kathy, who becomes Steve's romantic interest.

In an unrealistic series of events, Steve's advertisements are used across the nation and become a hit. Suddenly, the ad company wants Steve to write more wacko ads.

But Steve wants to stay at the institution, so he gets the mentally ill patients to write ads with him.

The film's storyline was frustrating to watch — get a few laughs from a crazy ad, follow with 20 minutes of boring story, then wake up the audience with another funny ad.

Of course the plot has no credibility, and the filmmakers rely on the ads and the insane characters to

CRAZY PEOPLE
Starring Dudley Moore and Daryl Hannah
Directed by Tony Bill
Rated R

make the film entertaining. Well, the ads are funny, but the performances are unoriginal and uninspired.

Hannah and Moore are completely forgettable in their roles. They have no screen chemistry together, and since the story is designed to set up the advertisement jokes, there is nothing for the stars to do but be boring.

What a waste. Moore can be a funny comedian, as he was in the films "10" and "Arthur." Hannah's best performances were in two comedies — "Splash" and "Roxanne."

If the amusing ads were condensed into 15 minutes of film, it might be worth the price of a movie ticket.

But since "Crazy People" is mostly drizzle, the toaster just isn't worth the tour through this film.

Reviewer refutes columnists' rejection of state of modern music

Beyond Top 40: alternative music supersedes 'soulless' pop

By JOHN RIGHTER
Of The Battalion Staff

Having been the "music critic" for *The Battalion* this year, I've endured great criticism and confrontation about my musical opinions and beliefs.

Last Thursday, opinion page columnists Timm Doolen and Matt McBurnett collaborated on a disgustingly trite, cliché-ridden editorial on the state of modern music.

Now, I consider Timm and Matt to be two of *The Battalion's* finest writers, and a couple of great guys, but the opportunity to dish back some of the crap I've had dished on me this year is just too irresistible.

The fact that Timm and Matt love classic rock is great. Some incredible music came from the '60s and '70s.

The Beatles, David Bowie, Jimi Hendrix, the Velvet Underground and the Clash are all musical heroes and some of my favorite performers. And certainly, none can argue the influence they have had on today's music.

The problem is Timm and Matt's elitist attitude and musical ignorance. Timm and Matt write, "...today's popular 'music' is, for the most part, prepackaged, soulless muzak for the mind."

Has "popular" music ever been any different? I have this deep suspicion that Timm and Matt like classic rock so darn much because they assume, like so many others, that MTV, 104.7 KKYS and Hastings Music are fully representative of today's music.

Well, guys, if you reach far enough into a trash can, you're probably going to pull out a handful of trash.

And judging today's music by big-time radio stations, MTV and chain record stores will definitely result in a fistful of manure.

Fortunately, there lies a sea of alternatives that any music fan should be frothing at the mouth to find.

A couple of statements in Timm and Matt's editorial tipped me off to their ignorance.

First, they claim that most of today's musicians do not write their own music, play their own instruments, sing their own songs

These are bands committed to their music as a way of life. You won't ever hear a Black Flag or Ministry song playing backdrop for a sneaker commercial. "Revolution" is in their hearts, not on their feet.

(if no one writes any of their own music, or sing any of their songs, then how do they end up being recorded?), take part in their production or write in a meaningful and expressive manner.

Timm, Matt, do R.E.M., U2, the Cure, the Police, Metallica, the Replacements, Living Colour, Prince, Tracy Chapman or the Talking Heads mean anything to you?

If you want to judge the '80s by Paula Abdul, New Kids On The Block and Milli Vanilli, then let's judge the '60s by Pat Boone, Johnny Mathis and the Monkees.

Pop music is a fad by its very nature. The majority of pop artists come along, have their 15 minutes of fame, and then go off to appear weekly on "The Gong Show" or tag along on a revue tour with Herman's Hermits and the Beach Boys.

How many of us still get really stoked

over Leo Sayer, ABBA, the Bee Gees or Christopher Cross? Yet all four performers have recorded several number-one singles.

Second, calling hardcore, rap and industrial dance heartless, non-expressive and "soulless muzak for the mind" is utterly ridiculous.

Although we can argue on the quality of musicianship (an argument I'll win), no one who has ever taken the time to listen to a hardcore, rap or industrial dance band, or better yet, seen them perform live, can honestly say these bands are not the most en-

ergetic, emotional and self-expressive performers ever.

These are bands committed to their music as a way of life. You won't ever hear a Black Flag or Ministry song playing backdrop for a sneaker commercial. "Revolution" is in their hearts, not on their feet.

Further, if Matt and Timm had thought their argument through, they would have realized that both the Beatles and the Rolling Stones began their careers by recording blues covers.

In fact, if Timm and Matt could go back in their little time warp they would realize in the early '60s most Americans considered the Beatles to be some "Euro-fag dance crap." At one time the Beatles were a regular chip off the New Kids On The Block.

By listing the Traveling Wilburys and the release of David Bowie's CD collection as

the highlights of the '80s, I realize Timm and Matt just haven't had the courage to pull their heads out of their holes.

Those big stadiums are sure safe and comfortable, and boy, aren't those Hastings' CD sales great.

I was scared once, too, guys. When I was nine or 10, I also listened to the local "pop" station, and if there had been an MTV then, well, darn, I probably would've watched my fair share of "Downtown" Julie Brown and Kevin Seal.

It's time, however, to be a little creative and to shed our musical ignorance. Saying nothing good has happened to rock since the '60s shows as much common sense as saying nothing positive has happened to physics since that darn apple fell on Newton's head.

Rock has grown through a natural progression, building on the best of the '60s and '70s, and with this growth it has widened, deepened and improved. It's gotten so good that it is impossible to keep up with everything that is going on.

Do you realize the increase in musical assortment, innovation and expertise that has occurred in just the past five years? Obviously not.

Timm and Matt miss the real problems with today's music — one being the audience. How many of you have honestly ever listened to Dinosaur Jr, the Meat Puppets, 7Seconds, Hugo Largo, Fugazi or Camper Van Beethoven?

Open your eyes, be resourceful and don't let the opportunity to experience the bizarre and wonderful pass by.

The number one thing killing today's music isn't pop, it's the money-grubbing, hyped-for-nuthin' "dinosaur" tours that

take away from bands who truly and passionately care about their music and not just the money.

The recent albums by Anderson, Bruford, Wakeman and Howe, the Doble Brothers and the Jefferson Airplane were disgraceful, unimaginative and incredibly sloppy. There's your "soulless," guys.

If you want to judge the '80s by Paula Abdul, New Kids On The Block and Milli Vanilli, then let's judge the '60s by Pat Boone, Johnny Mathis and the Monkees.

And McCartney, he's more concerned with peddling his tourbooks, full of personal propaganda and idolatry, than with making a decent solo album.

Why do you think his concert was 50 percent Beatles songs, and the rest mostly Wings material?

Thank God he was smart enough to team up with Elvis Costello (a modern man, no less) on his last album.

As a final test, let's compare the '80 releases of Timm and Matt's heroes with mine.

Dirty Work (the Rolling Stones), *Knocked Out Loaded* (Bob Dylan), *Ear Dances* (The Who), *Never Let Me Down* (David Bowie), and *Pipes of Peace* (Paul McCartney) versus *The Joshua Tree* (U2), *Murmur* (R.E.M.), *Vivid* (Living Colour), *Tracy Chapman* (Tracy Chapman) and *Tim* (the Replacements).

I rest my case.

TV special recaptures spirit of odd variety show

NEW YORK (AP) — Remember Sunday nights, when people would gather around the tube and tribalize with Ed Sullivan and jugglers and magicians and acrobats and puppets and beautiful ladies in tights? What did they call that stuff?

Oh, yeah. Variety. If you miss those days, CBS and magician-author Ricky Jay offer a droll, affectionate and engrossing hour tonight of '90s-style vaudeville: "Learned Pigs and Fireproof Women." You just don't see this stuff on TV nowadays.

The show's title comes from Jay's book, a history of such esoteric acts as pigs who could do arithmetic and women who could endure steak-broiling temperatures.

The entertainments are interspersed with backstage business, historic footage and photos illustrating the extent to which jugglers, magicians and daredevils would go to thrill an audience.

Jay opens the show in Los Angeles' Warner Grand Theater with his own amazing ability to throw playing cards farther, faster and harder than anyone in history. "Unfortunately, this theater is too small," he allows.

Then he demonstrates WHY the theater is too small, defending himself against various fruits up to and including a belligerent watermelon. For further instruction, see his book "Cards as Weapons."

"That dates back to my childhood in Brooklyn, when I started throwing baseball cards," Jay said. "I discovered I could hit things."

The pace is wonderful. If Shakuntala Devi, the lady who calculates

cube roots at a glance doesn't thrill you, there's another act right behind it.

Like Michael Moschen, a man who juggles himself, who delightfully animates a crystal ball. Or Meagan Riesel, a 100-pound strongwoman for the '90s, who shows off her mastery of the "odic force," a skill that lets her resist being lifted or displaced by much stronger, heavier people.

Jamey Turner, a virtuoso on glass harp, plays Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" on 60 water-filled brandy snifters, and quick-change artist Michael McGivney plays all the parts in a scene from the stage play "Oliver Twist."

John Gaughan, the leading designer of magical illusions, shows off his restoration of an automaton acrobat, a fascinating mechanical device built by the great magician Robert Houdin in 1847.

And Steve Martin, the comedian, brings in "lost footage" of his vaudevilian grandfather, The Great Flydini, one of the greatest magicians of all time, who produces all manner of innocent objects from a startling place.

"These are people that I am particularly fascinated by," Jay said. "This is my world. These people are all, to some extent, my friends and some are also my very close friends."

All these delightful acts are interspersed with amusing backstage business: A woman in Bo Peep outfit leads an enormous hog and a very small bike offstage. "How'd it go?" Jay asks.

"Not so good," says Bo, looking tired. "He wouldn't do the wheelie." Tune in.

In Advance



Battalion file photo

Country singer Lionel Cartwright will perform Saturday at 10:30 at the Texas Hall of Fame, on FM 2818 in Bryan. Tickets are \$8 in advance and \$10 at the door.

New country artist Cartwright to perform at Texas Hall of Fame

Country singer Lionel Cartwright will perform at the Texas Hall of Fame Saturday at 10:30 p.m.

Cartwright, who was nominated for the Best New Male Vocalist award by the Academy of

Country Music, released the singles "Like Father Like Son," "Give Me His Last Chance" and "In My Eyes" from his 1989 debut album.

Tickets are on sale at the Hall of Fame. For more information, call 822-2222.

Aggie Players to present opening of comedy 'Steel Magnolias' tonight

The Aggie Players will present their debut performance of Robert Harling's "Steel Magnolias" tonight at 8 in Rudder Forum.

The play, set in a Louisiana beauty shop, chronicles the life of six women over a two-year period.

Starring in "Steel Magnolias" are Lanell Pena as Truvy, Lisa Wood as Annelle, Desiree Dunman as Clairee, Jennifer Green as

Shelby, Ren Powell as M'Lynn and Mary Ellen Brennan as Ouiser.

Robert Wenck will direct.

The play continues Friday, Saturday and April 25-28. Tickets are on sale at Rudder Box Office. Prices are \$5 for the general public and \$4 for students and senior citizens.

For reservations and information, call 845-1234.

Bobby Mack and Night Train to record live album at local club

The rhythm and blues band Bobby Mack and Night Train will record a live album Friday at the Front Porch Cafe from 9:30 p.m.-1:30 a.m.

The album will be Mack's third release and his first live project with the band.

Mack, who was musical director of the Texas/USSR Music Revue, was awarded the title of "Musical Ambassador to the World" by the Texas Senate.

Call 846-LIVE for more information.

Annual day-long JazzFest returns to College Station's Central Park

The College Station Parks and Recreation Department will host JazzFest '90 on April 21 from noon to midnight at Central Park, 1000 Krenek Tap Road in College Station.

Entertainment will include: Don Pope and Friends (noon), Mady Kaye Quintet featuring

Tony Compise (2 p.m.), The Wise Guys (4 p.m.), North Texas One O'Clock Lab Band (6 p.m.), Trella Hart (8 p.m.) and The TAMU Jazz Band (10 p.m.).

Other attractions include game booths and a learning circus for children. Refreshments will be available. Admission is free.